

KPS CONSULTING

“Building an Access Bridge in Technology and Telecommunications”

3508 Albemarle Street, NW

Washington, DC 20008

202.641.3849

kpsconsulting@starpower.net

December 12, 2006

Captioned Telephone State Restrictions and Waiting Lists

Current restrictions

Most states that offer captioned telephone services limit the number of residents who can be added to these programs in any one month. The following is a sampling of such limitations:

10 per month: Nevada, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming.

11 per month: Mississippi

12 per month: South Carolina

15 per month: Connecticut

16 per month: Tennessee

20 per month: Arizona, Missouri, Montana, Oregon

25 per month: Alabama, Arkansas, Hawaii, Michigan, Kentucky

35 per month: Pennsylvania

40 per month: New Mexico

50 per month: Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, the Federal CapTel Program (FCP serves federal government employees, retirees, veterans, and U.S. Tribal members. FCP is operated under the Telecommunications Accessibility Enhancement Act of 1988 and is separate from state and federal relay programs)

Waiting Lists

The above restrictions have resulted in many people have to wait to receive captioned telephone services across the country, as evidenced by the following sampling of programs:

Federal CapTel Program

Approximately 450 people have been waiting to get captioned telephones since September, 2006. FCP just received permission to add an additional 600 units, which will be delivered from January until June to those already on the waiting list.

New York: Beginning January, New York will allow 300 individuals to join its captioned telephone program each month. They are now already over their 300 limit for January and have a waiting list of 82 people for February orders before they start service.

Wisconsin: Until last month, Wisconsin only permitted 5 residents to be added to its captioned telephone program each month. As a consequence, the state had a waiting list that was over one year. A mid-November change in the state's policy eliminated all limitations on entry into this program. (Note: 2-3 individuals died while on this particular waiting list).

Michigan: Because of Michigan's 25/month limit, currently, January and February each have waiting lists of 25 people and March has a waiting list of 13 people.

Note that information about state waiting lists is hard to obtain; some states do not keep this information; others simply allow their residents to contact captioned telephone vendors directly (i.e., they do not keep waiting lists). Those vendors are then only permitted to sell a certain number of captioned telephone phones each month, per the state's limitations. Even where there are waiting lists, these are not fully indicative of the numbers of people who need or want captioned telephone services. This is in part because in many states, there is no formal outreach and education program on captioned telephone services and people generally learn about this program by word-of-mouth.

States without Captioned Telephone Programs:

The following states do not have captioned telephone: Washington state (Note: 200 persons previously participated in a state trial, but these individuals no longer have access to this service), Massachusetts, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, West Virginia, Delaware, Arkansas, South Dakota, and Washington, D.C.